Special Town Meeting 2022 – Finance Committee Recommendations

The Finance Committee has a responsibility to create the budget for the Town as well as to provide recommendations on articles in the Town Meeting Warrant. The committee reviews each article on the warrant, thoughtfully considering presented information and discussion, and then votes a recommendation. While the recommendations are printed in the warrant, the committee is presenting additional information here, in advance of Town Meeting, with the hope that it will be of benefit to residents and voters.

Article 1 – Debate Rules

Recommend: Approval

This article proposes the adoption of procedures for Town Meeting. These are the usual procedures under which we operate Town Meeting, except that the number of minutes a person may speak has been increased from three to five, returning to what had been the pre-pandemic rule. These procedures provide a means by which an orderly and efficient meeting may be run.

8-0-0

The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article 2 – Community Preservation Surcharge – Fiscal Year 2024

Recommend: Approval 6-1-0

This article would continue the 3% Community Preservation property tax surcharge for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023. Approximately 1.3% is needed, either from a surcharge or from the tax levy, to cover payments for Bedford's existing Community Preservation debt. In fiscal year 2022, the amount of state funds Bedford received was \$908,721, which was a match of 49.93%. The Finance Committee generally approves of the CPC projects funded by this article and this article has always readily passed at Town Meeting.

The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article 3 – Community Preservation Budget – Supplemental FY2023

Recommend: Approval 6-0-1

The Finance Committee discussed the requests and found them to be warranted.

The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article 4 – Petitioners Article – Fire Station Project Design Appropriation Change

Recommendation: None

The Finance Committee was unable to reach the number of votes required to recommend approval or disapproval. See comments for Article 5.

Article 5 – Petitioners Article – Establish Fire Station Site Location Committee

Recommendation: None

The Finance Committee was unable to reach the number of votes required to recommend approval or disapproval. Some members stated that the project should go forward and that Articles 4 and 5 if approved would at best only delay the project and make it more expensive. Other members believed that Article 5 needs further clarification. Other members supported the Articles stating concerns about the project as currently approved.

Article 6 - Appropriate Funds for Bedford Police Permanent Firefighters Local 231- IAFF Collective Bargaining Agreement – FY 2023-2025

Recommend: Recommendation to be given at Annual Town Meeting

Article 7 - Appropriate Funds for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees AFL-CIO, State Council 93, Local 1730 Collective Bargaining Agreement – FY 2023-2025

Recommend: Recommendation to be given at Annual Town Meeting

Article 8 – Appropriate Funds for Minuteman High School Assessment

Recommend: Approval 8-0-0

This article increases the Town's payment to Minuteman High School by \$33,143. One more student than had been anticipated enrolled in this program. The Finance Committee is pleased that Bedford students wish to take advantage of this technical education, furthermore, the Town is obliged to make this payment.

The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article 9 – Home Rule Petition – Legal Notice Media Requirements

Recommend: Approval 8-0-0

The Finance Committee agrees that the limited availability of printed newspapers creates a hardship for dissemination of Bedford legal notices due to added costs and limited local readership of papers like the Lowell Sun, which is currently the option available for Bedford legal notices. Publishing legal notices on the Town of Bedford website would be effective and beneficial to Bedford residents.

The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article 10 – Minuteman Bikeway Extension

Recommendation: None

The Finance Committee was unable to reach the number of votes required to recommend approval or disapproval. Very generally, some members were concerned about or even disapproved of the use of eminent domain for this project, while other members supported the project and want it to move forward.

Respectfully Submitted the Bedford Finance Committee

Paul Mortenson, Chair Karen Dunn, Clerk Elizabeth McClung

Abigail Seibert Ben Thomas Ron O'Brien

Erica Liu Stephen Steele Tom Rowan